

southwest of American Samoa and 125 miles south of Samoa. The earthquake, which registered 8.3 on the Richter scale, produced waves 20 feet in height that penetrated one mile inland, sweeping away homes and cars.

On September 30, 2009, 700 lives were lost to a 7.6 magnitude earthquake originating in West Sumatra, Indonesia, which also destroyed 83,700 homes, 200 public buildings, 285 schools and other infrastructure.

In the wake of these recent events and on behalf of the 70,000 Asian American and Pacific Islanders living in the 9th Congressional District of Texas, including the 6,000 Filipino Americans that I represent, I extend my sincerest condolences to the families whose loved ones were lost in these tragedies. As the Philippines, American Samoa, Samoa, and Indonesia rebuild homes and communities destroyed in the disasters, we recognize the heroic rescue efforts mounted by international aid organizations and foreign governments, including American forces sent by President Obama. Let these events remind us of our shared humanity and concern for those struggling in the face of adversity.

Americans across the country continue to watch the recovery efforts being undertaken in the Philippines, American Samoa, Samoa, and Indonesia. We stand ready to assist our fellow brothers and sisters in need at a minute's notice, and we keep you every day in our thoughts and prayers.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 800, H. Res. 816, and H. Res. 810.

#### HONORING THE MADISON COUNTY ROTARY CLUB FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO BUILD ACCESS RAMP FOR DISABLED PERSONS IN THEIR COMMUNITY

**HON. PAUL C. BROWN**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 14, 2009*

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues and express my deepest appreciation for a great accomplishment in community service in my district.

On Saturday, October 17, 2009, the Madison County Rotary Club will be building their four-hundredth handicap-accessible ramp. As a Rotarian myself, I know that service projects like this allow thousands of disabled Americans to live more independent lives each and every day.

Since 1990, Madison County Rotarians have completed numerous service projects to benefit their community. The club consists of more than 60 members from very diverse professional backgrounds, and over the past 13 years, they have collectively built enough ramps to stretch over two miles if placed end to end.

These folks do not volunteer their time and resources to build these ramps for public recognition, nor do they profit from their work. In fact, they have given away over \$600,000 worth of labor and supplies through their ramp-building effort. Instead, these wonderful folks see themselves as a part of something much bigger: an organization of 1.2 million members divided into over 33,000 clubs—all over the world.

Rotary International operates under the motto "Service above Self." This service organization works all across the world to make people's lives better. It combats hunger, improves health and sanitation, provides education and job training, promotes peace, and is working to totally eradicate polio.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Madison County Rotary Club, its dedicated members, and the goals that all Rotarians are striving to achieve. Their accomplishments make the world a better place every day, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

#### TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S GOLD STAR MOTHERS

**HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 14, 2009*

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition that September 27, 2009, was designated as "Gold Star Mother's Day." It is fitting that we recognize the American Gold Star Mothers, whose sons and daughters have died in defense of the ideals of individual liberty. They should be honored and offered respect and gratitude for their personal sacrifice.

Gold Star Mother's Day is intended to honor women who deserve special recognition and gratitude for their tremendous personal loss on behalf of our country.

During the early days of World War I, a Blue Star was used to represent each Soldier in military service of the United States, and as the war progressed and Soldiers were killed or wounded in combat or died from wounds or disease, a Gold Star superimposed over the Blue Star designated the loss of these individuals. This tradition recognized Soldiers for their ultimate sacrifice to our country and the Gold Star offered families an outward symbol by which to honor the loss of a loved one.

In 1928, the Gold Star tradition was formalized in Washington, D.C., by a group of mothers who had lost sons and daughters in service to their country and met to form the American Gold Star Mothers organization. This organization is a nondenominational, non-profitable and nonpolitical organization that is dedicated in supporting veterans, military families, and Service Members returning from our present day battlefields.

In 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt issued a proclamation which recognized Gold Star Mothers for their strength and inspiration to this country.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to appreciate the services rendered to the United States by the mothers of America who have strengthened and inspired our Nation throughout history and that we honor the Gold Star Mothers of America for their courage and their strength.

#### HONORING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 14, 2009*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Hispanic Heritage Month,

which runs from September 15, 2009 through October 15, 2009.

The earliest Spanish settlers arrived in the United States over 400 years ago. And since then, millions of Hispanic men and women have immigrated to the United States from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean nations, as well as Central America, South America, and Spain. These brave men, women, and children have come in search of freedom, peace, and opportunity.

The U.S. Census Bureau currently lists Hispanic Americans as the largest ethnic minority within the entire United States with a population of 46,900,000 people, making up fifteen percent of our nation's total population. Hispanics also comprise the largest ethnic minority group in 20 States including my home State of New Jersey.

Hispanics are a vital cog to our economy and own over 2.5 million small businesses in the United States, which have generated more than \$400 billion in revenue. Among these businesses, Latina-owned entities are growing quickly and are currently generating more than \$45 billion in sales. Hispanic businesses are rapidly expanding growing 31% from between 1997 and 2002, over three times the national average during that period.

Within my own Congressional District, the Morris County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is a thriving group that has been recognized with distinction. Last year the Morris County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was recognized as the best medium Hispanic Chamber in our region, and for nearly thirty five years, the community has been served ably by the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs.

Hispanic Americans have displayed great valor in warfare over the course of our nation's history fighting in every war in the history of the United States. There are over 1,100,000 Hispanic veterans of the United States Armed Forces, with forty-three of them winning the Medal of Honor, the highest military distinction in the United States.

Hispanic Americans have served our nation as dedicated public servants, holding positions at the highest level of government, including Cabinet Secretaries, Senators, Supreme Court Justices, and Members of the House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, Hispanic Americans have contributed greatly to our country for hundreds of years, and are worthy of recognition. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Hispanic Heritage Month.

#### SERVICE MEMBERS HOME OWNERSHIP TAX ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. DANIEL B. MAFFEI**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 2009*

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 3590, the Service Members Home Ownership Tax Act. It is important that the brave men and women currently serving our country have an opportunity to take advantage of programs such as the First-Time Homebuyer Tax Credit. I was proud to introduce similar legislation with the same goal of extending the opportunity for service men and